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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 188
By Jones, S.

A RESOLUTION to create a special joint committee to study the development of a program to allow health care consumers in the state of Tennessee access to information relative to health care professionals and entities.

WHEREAS, selecting a health care professional is one of the most important and far-reaching decisions most people will ever make; and

WHEREAS, it is important that this decision-making process consist of an open and honest flow of information between those in the health care profession and consumers; and

WHEREAS, currently, much information regarding health care professionals and entities is not available to the general public; and

WHEREAS, there is an understandable need for consumers to be able to access and be aware of their caregivers' backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, the importance of this information to consumers and those in the health care field necessitates that the utmost attention be given to the dissemination of accurate, timely information; and

WHEREAS, there is legitimate concern by those in the health care industry, consumers, and others about the types of information to be made available to consumers and how it will be formatted; and

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WHEREAS, any program developed to provide consumers with information about their caregivers should be approached carefully, as any procedures to provide such information are new and untested; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that this General Assembly examine the merits of a system of disseminating information regarding health care providers to health care consumers in order to further strengthen the integrity of Tennessee's health care system; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE-HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That there is hereby created a special joint committee to study and to create legislation enabling health care consumers in the state of Tennessee to have access to information regarding health care professionals and entities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the special joint committee shall be composed of four (4) members of the Senate and four (4) members of the House of Representatives, to be appointed by the respective Speakers, two (2) physician representatives to be nominated by the Tennessee Medical Association, one (1) consumer representative to be nominated by the Tennessee Health Care Campaign, and one (1) consumer representative to be nominated by Citizen Action.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That at the request of the chair, all appropriate agencies of state government shall provide staff assistance to the special joint committee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the committee shall be convened by the member with the most years of continuous service in the General Assembly, and at its first meeting shall elect from among its legislative members any officers the committee deems necessary.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the special committee shall timely report its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation or interim reports to the 1998 session of the One-Hundredth General Assembly no later than February 1, 1998, at which time the committee shall cease to exist.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the committee shall investigate the most efficient and cost-effective methods by which any such program may be implemented, with special emphasis being placed on recommending a source of funding for the proposed program.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the committee, in its deliberations, concentrate on devising methods for, and making recommendations on:

A) disseminating information to consumers;

B) ensuring that errors are not present in health care professional and entity records, and that those involved have a meaningful opportunity to examine and correct such records before they are released to consumers;

C) what appropriate information is best provided to the consumer, and the format in which such information should be presented;

D) the appropriate agency, or agencies, responsible for overseeing such a program; and

E) the desirability and feasibility of similar consumer programs in other professional fields; and

F) Specific penalty provisions to be enforced by the appropriate professional licensing board.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That to avoid any obstacles or unforeseen complications in the development and implementation of this consumer service, the committee shall closely study any similar types of programs operating throughout the country.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the committee shall research other entities that may currently be collecting such data, and report on the prospects of contracting with such entities for the creation and provision of such a consumer information program.